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## Postgraduate Student's Engagement in their Learning Environment in the Kwa-Zulu Natal College of Nursing

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**Background:** Student engagement in their education institutions and in learning is a predictor of student success. Postgraduate students pursue further studies to strengthen the health systems and improve the quality of care. Therefore institutions have to ensure that they succeed in their studies and complete within record time.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to analyze and describe student engagement in postgraduate nursing education programmes

**Research Methodology:** A quantitative approach and non-experimental, descriptive exploratory research design were used. A total of 179 post-basic students participated in the study and data was collected using a self-administered questionnaire. Data was analyzed statistically through descriptive and parametrical statistics. Ethics principles were observed throughout the study.

**Results:** The results revealed three forms of engagement; emotional, behavioral and cognitive engagement and variations in the levels of engagement. Active and collaborative learning, student-staff interaction, enriching educational experiences and a supportive learning environment were scored high as drivers as engagement. Maturity of the students, reasons for furthering studies and language of instruction as a home language were rated high as predictors of success. The participants, irrespective of the programme or specialization, had a fair level of engagement. Limited technology skills and resources were cited as barriers to engagement. The Pearson Chi-Square test, however, showed differences among different groups of students in certain areas of engagement.

**Conclusion:** Student engagement is a shared responsibility between the institution and the students, with both parties having a significant role. There is a dynamic interplay between student engagement, the quality of student learning and the learning environment. When these three areas are aligned the likelihood of success increases. Postgraduate students, as adult learners are better positioned to engage in their education and learning programmes.

### Biography:

Ntombifikile Mtshali, known as Fikile is a Professor in Nursing Department at the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal. The Nursing Department is a World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Nursing and Midwifery in Africa. Fikile is a nurse and a midwife. She has specialized in nursing education. Her research area is in health professionals education, with specific interest in the transformation of nursing and midwifery education in the African Region. She has published extensively in this area.